



THE MESSENGER

Introducing Rev. Dr. Amy Aitken

Pastor Amy Aitken and her husband, Mark Wright, moved to Pasadena last month and are eager to begin their ministry with the people of First UMC Pasadena. A native of Southern California, Pastor Amy attended high school and college in California before moving to Atlanta to attend seminary at Candler School of Theology at Emory University, and later earned a Doctor of Ministry at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington DC. She was ordained in 1997 and has served United Methodist churches in Ventura, Granada Hills, Long Beach, Costa Mesa and Redondo Beach. Pastor Amy is passionate about connecting our Christian faith to our everyday lives in ways that are practical, spiritually-grounded, compassionate and just.



“Aunt Amy” was privileged to raise her niece/daughter, Nikki, from the age of six, as a single parent for about eight years until Mark joined their family ten years ago. Now a young adult, Nikki lives in Long Beach (and may only occasionally be spotted at Pasadena First). When not at church, she enjoys being outdoors, hiking, camping, working out (“enjoy” might be an overstatement on this one), days at the beach, traveling (30 countries and a whole bunch of states so far!), entertaining, and hanging out with Mark, Nikki, her father, and friends.

July 2021

First United
Methodist
Church

In-person Worship Resumes July 11 at 10 a.m.

Plan to be present for the congregation's return to the Sanctuary as we welcome our new Pastor, Rev. Dr. Amy Aitken.

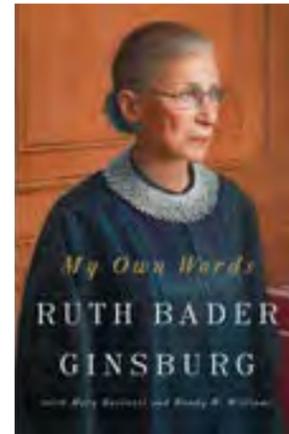
All-Church Picnic Follows Worship

Burgers, hot dogs and vegetarian options will be provided. Please bring a salad or dessert to share. **RSVP: Please call the church office(626-796-0157) and let Aisha know how many people are in your party and what you can bring.**

**Turn-a-Page Book Group**

Turn-a-Page book group continues through the summer. In July we move on to the life and work of Ruth Bader Ginsberg as she reveals *In My Own Words*.

We learn of the struggle women faced who wished to become lawyers and society's attitudes about what was appropriate for women. She shares some inside stories about Supreme Court members and their close friendships, in spite of different perspectives about what is constitutional.



Newcomers are welcome to participate in the Zoom discussion on July 19 at 7:00 p.m. Contact Ellen Peterson (empeterson1@sbcglobal.net) to receive the link to the meeting.

Sermon Series**I've Been Meaning to Ask**

How can we listen to one another? How do we find connection despite distance? How do we create space for compassionate dialogue and for seeking the holy in one another?

While the challenges of becoming a beloved community for one another are endless, these questions are simple. All courageous conversations begin with simple questions and the curiosity to truly listen. May this series help us to behold each other as images of the divine. May it help us strengthen our capacity for empathy and compassion. May it remind us of the power of asking unassuming questions. May it show us that courage is rooted in the heart.

July 18**I've been meaning to ask... where are you from?**

In order to build connection and trust, we need to listen to each other's stories and experiences to learn who and what has shaped us.

Scripture focus: Genesis 2:4b-15 and John 1:35-51

July 25**I've been meaning to ask... where does it hurt?**

All of us have known pain and suffering. In order to cultivate connection, we must first get curious about the pain others carry and the pain we carry ourselves.

Scripture focus: 1 Samuel 1:1-18 and Mark 5:21-43

**August 1****I've been meaning to ask... what do you need?**

We each have unique needs and we can't assume to know what is best for others. Even our own needs, priorities, and desires, can sometimes be difficult to discern from one situation to the next.

Scripture focus: Job 2:11-13 and 2 Timothy 4:9-18

August 8**I've been meaning to ask... where do we go from here?**

While stepping into the next chapter, our hope is that we keep cultivating curiosity, asking questions, having conversations, and seeking connection in order to humanize and care for each other.

Scripture focus: Ruth 1:1-22 and Acts 10

Change in Policy for Sleeping at the Church

By Marilyn Wilander, Trustee Chair

The Trustees have regretfully determined that, at this time, for multiple reasons, the policy of providing opportunities for the unhoused to sleep at the church needs to be discontinued.

The primary reason for this change in policy is safety, although finances are also a factor.

A brief history: For several years the pastoral staff have supported the practice of having the unhoused sleeping on the church grounds. The church invited those in need to use our bathrooms while the church building was open; however there was no acceptable way for folks to use the bathroom when the church was closed, and this created significant sanitation problems. The Trustees explored options with the City of Pasadena, with Friends in Deed, and with Union

Station. The challenges that the church staff and lay people have faced, including threats and injuries, is well-documented over more than five years.

In March 2019 Trustees took the lead and hosted a dinner meeting with multiple groups: 1) Those who were currently sleeping around the premises, 2) Union Station, 3) Friends in Deed, 4) Pasadena PD, 5) Our church's Risk-Taking Mission Committee. We shared that providing significant supervision when the church was closed was not financially possible, and that our unhoused guests would have to contact Pasadena PD when problems occurred. Union Station shared that FUMC wanted to help, but agreed that if things didn't work out, FUMC would have no option but to close the program. Immediately after the meeting, Trustees met and voted to provide a porta-potty on church property. This helped, but unfortunately didn't completely eliminate the problem of human waste being found in multiple places around the church property. These problems occurred AFTER the porta-potty was installed but BEFORE Covid changed everything.

The challenges that the unhoused face is a national epidemic that must be addressed. For decades our church has provided support in multiple ways: the Tuesday Social Service program; picking up donated food from multiple locations and delivering it to Friends in Deed; providing monthly meals to Union Station and the Family Promise program; helping to staff the Bad Weather Shelter; and providing space for Meals on Wheels. The youth and others have provided sandwiches and outreach in our city parks.

Although there were multiple factors, safety was the immediate concern that prompted our action. After Pastor Amy Aitken has had a chance to know a little more, FUMC will provide a forum for how we can better serve those in need. May we continue to be dedicated to being servant people to those in need, to our congregation, and to our staff and pastors.

Summer Choir Is Happening!

All who have a tuneful voice, are over 18, and have been vaccinated against COVID-19, are invited to join in the summer choir from Sunday, July 11, through Labor Day. We will meet in the Sanctuary at 9:15 to learn a simple anthem for that day's service. Come once or every Sunday, as your summer plans allow.

**2021-2022 Back-to-School Drive**

In July, we are collecting donations of backpacks and school supplies for Friends in Deed (FID) and the Adopt a Child Abuse Caseworker (ACAC) program. Check eNews for supply lists and due dates!





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**God is CREATIVE
and so are YOU!**

Register for VBS 2021: Camp Creative: July 19 - 23

Children, ages 4 through 12, are invited to join us this summer, as we learn that each of us are Creative like God, Creative for Creation, Creative and Beloved, and Creative for Justice!

The program will be Monday through Thursday mornings, with a fun family outing on Friday morning. You can choose to participate in the Full Program, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m., which begins and ends indoors in age-level classrooms, or in the Outdoor Only Program from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. All CDC safety guidelines for day camps will be followed.

Register at fumcpasadena.org/camp-creative